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CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS

The system of divine imperial sovereignty, as codified in the Meiji Constitution of 1889, sought to place the ultimate basis of political authority in the myths surrounding the oracles of the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu. Under this system, the people of Japan were forced to believe in a pseudo-religion denoted as "kokutai", which centered on the worship of the emperor as a "living god." From the outset, there was severe strain with Christianity, and the freedoms of religion and conscience were persecuted in many ways. Moreover, the history of various restrictions forced upon Christian education has left an indelible mark in our minds.

On numerous occasions this pseudo-religion suppressed the freedoms of thought and speech, obstructed the advance of learning, and limited the ability of universities to fulfill their social responsibilities. It is far too recent to forget the role played by the "kokutai" ideology during the years when Japan invaded its neighbors and spread the flames of war around the world, before finally bringing on its own self-destruction.

Looking back on this history, it is only natural we should make a clear distinction between the provisions of the present constitution which define the emperor as the symbol of state and the former system of divine imperial sovereignty, and that we should maintain strict vigilance to guard against any move toward a resurrection of the old system.

Nonetheless, we are deeply grieved to observe that now, at the time of the

succession of a new emperor, attempts are consistently being made to accept as a foregone conclusion ceremonies which have no basis in the current Imperial House Law. It appears that there is an attempt to revive ceremonies which were once authorized in the by-laws of the now abolished pre-war Imperial House Law, using the argument that they derive from tradition and convention.

In this context, we see that some functions named in the list of Ceremonies Related to the Accession of the Emperor, made public on January 19 have been scheduled almost axiomatically, without due reflection and discussion, even though there is room to doubt their legality under the present Constitution which declares sovereignty to rest with the people. In particular, the Ceremony of Thanksgiving (Daijosai), which is not mentioned in any of the regulations in the Imperial House Law, but has been acknowledged as the ceremony which transforms "the emperor into a living God" (an idea declared "baseless" by Emperor Hirohito in his New Year's address some 44 years ago) is nevertheless shamelessly included in the series of ceremonies connected with the accession and enthronement of the new emperor.

To hold such a ceremony is a clear diversion from the principle of the separation of government and religion. It can only be feared as a movement toward a return to imperial divine sovereignty and away from the present system in which the emperor is defined as the symbol of the unity of the state. It will inevitably invite the suspicions of those neighboring countries to which Japan, under the guise of imperial divine sovereignty, caused such tremendous suffering.

We as persons bearing responsibility toward Christian universities in Japan, can no longer remain silent about these

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events. We hereby make clear our deep concern and appeal to the Government to reconsider these matters and urge that broad and free discussions take place.

Kazuo Tsuge, President
Kwansei Gakuin University

Yasuo Watanabe, President
International Christian University

Toru Yuge, President
Ferris University

Kanichi Fukuda, President
Meiji Gakuin University

EXTREMIST ATTACKS ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Two shots were fired into the home of Toru Yuge, 66, president of Ferris College for Women, in Nerima Ward, Tokyo, at 11:15 p.m. Sunday. Police are investigating the possibility that the shots were fired by ultra-rightists.

Yuge had, along with three presidents of Christian universities, issued a statement on April 12 opposing the Daijosai and other ceremonies attendant on enthronement of the Emperor because the rites could open the way to deifying the Emperor.

Called by Yuge family members, police rushed to their home and found two holes in a window on the second floor.

According to Fumiko, Yuge's wife, the shots were fired into Yuge's study facing the street. Yuge had closed the "shoji" (paper sliding door) behind the window and was doing some writing while listening to a record when the shots were fired. The shots passed upward through the room and hit bedding in the closet.

Mrs. Yuge said it was "probably because he issued a statement opposing the Daijosai. The light was on so I believe he was targeted. If my husband had been standing, he could have been hit."

Yuge is a former professor at Tokyo

University, and he has been president of Ferris College for Women since 1988.

(Article appeared in the "Asahi Evening News", April 23, 1990)

IN SOLIDARITY WITH YUGE

With great surprise and anger we learned the news of the attack on your home on the evening of April 22, 1990. It was a relief to know that you were not injured but the feeling of being threatened must be unimaginable. We, the National Christian Council in Japan and the Center for Signature Collection Against Daijosai express to you our sincere concerns and commitment on this matter.

Mr. Motoshima, the Mayor of Nagasaki, was shot only a few months ago because of comments he made regarding the Tenno's war responsibility. In the same manner we interpret that your incident is also a challenge to those who express views critical of the Tenno's Enthronement and the Daijosai ceremony.

Once again, the incident proves that the Tenno system has been sustained by a 'Taboo' ideology coupled with violence. We renew our commitment to make extra efforts to struggle against any violence which threatens freedom of speech by upholding our voices in solidarity.

We will not be silent with our opinions, nor withdraw our actions as a result of this incident, but we will continue to speak out and say "Yes to the just, and no to the unjust," through witnessing to the truth which will remain through the judgement of history.

We will continue to affirm views critical of the Tenno's Enthronement and the Daijosai, in solidarity with the many concerned and loving people in the world.

Rev. Kentaro Takeuchi, Moderator
Rev. Munetoshi Maejima, General Secretary
Mr. Koichi Oshima, Chairperson, Center for Signature Collection Against Daijosai

EDUCATION MINISTRY ISSUES DIRECTIVE

The Ministry of Education has issued a directive, making it compulsory for the "Hinomaru" flag to be raised and "Kimigayo" sung at school ceremonies and national holidays.

Previously the ministry had stated that it is "desirable" for this to be done. A revision has now been made to make this virtually compulsory.

It was in 1977 that the Education Ministry formally designated "Kimigayo" as the national anthem. This was done without undergoing discussion in the National Diet. In other words, both the "Hinomaru" and "Kimigayo" have never been legally constituted as the official national flag and national anthem. The ministry's view is that this directive follows customary practices of the past.

Some time remains before a complete changeover occurs to the new teaching guidelines that have been prepared. The formal adoption is scheduled in 1992 for primary schools. It will be one year later for junior high schools and two years later for senior high schools.

Notwithstanding, the ministry issued a directive on "Hinomaru" and "Kimigayo" to be carried out from the school entrance ceremonies in April this year. By this move the Ministry displays its will to maintain strong central control, with the possibility of punishment for those who do not obey.

Parents and teachers who oppose the ministry's directive and question why it should be compulsory, point to the fact that there is no law designating the "Hinomaru" (rising sun flag) as the national flag and "Kimigayo" as the national anthem. Furthermore, they assert that the flag as a symbol in the past of Japanese military aggression in Asia and that the words of "Kimigayo" are not suitable for a democratic nation.

"Kimigayo" is a song which expresses

prayers for the long life of the emperor. As a national anthem, it would thus be contradictory to the Constitution of Japan, which places sovereignty with the people. The Ministry of Education explains that the purpose in making the "Hinomaru" and "Kimigayo" compulsory is to "foster a sense of patriotism and love for one's country, and also to show equal respect for the national flag and anthem of all other countries. However, as these were not accepted based upon the democratic will of the people, and 40 years later remain throughout Asia as symbols of Japan's war of aggression, the Ministry's justification is hollow.

At a primary school entrance ceremony in Nagano City this year, the parent of one of the pupils going to school for the first time tore down the "Hinomaru" flag on display behind the rostrum. The potential for protests such as this one has increased, highlighting the need for open discussion of the fundamental issues that this problem raises.

BATAAN DEATH MARCH 48TH ANNIVERSARY MARKED BY "MARCH OF LIFE"

The annual observance of the Holy Week in the Philippines was marked by a special event this year. A six-day march for peace, reconciliation, international solidarity, and environmental concerns called the "Bataan March for Life," was held from April 8-15.

Coinciding with the 48th commemoration of the "Bataan Death March", the event, organized by the United Church of Christ in the Philippines and the United Church of Christ in Japan, featured a biblical interpretation recalling the agony of Filipino and American soldiers who marched across several provinces after their surrender to the Japanese in WW II.

On April 9, 1942 some 70,000 Filipino and American soldiers of the US Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFEF) who were captured by the Japanese Imperial Army were forced to march for over 100 kilometers. Thousands died of hunger, disease and

brutality along the way.

The "March for Life" began on April 8 at Kilometer Zero in Mariveles and ended in San Fernando on April 13. Most of the 5,000 expected participants were from ecumenical, religious, civic and sectoral groups.

The NCC/J's Philippine Committee sent the following statement of solidarity to the organizers of the "March for Life":

"Blessed Are the Peacemakers, For They Shall Be Called Children of God."
Matthew 5:9

As we remember the resurrection of the Lord in this Easter season, we pray for God's guidance and blessing on those who participated in the "Bataan March for Life" in order to pursue the peace of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

We send our great appreciation to the courageous people who carried on the March for Life, which began on April 8, 1990.

The Bataan Death March, 48 years ago, is an example of Japan's aggressive invasion of the Philippines and the brutal violence used against the people during World War II. As Christians in Japan we must not forget the Bataan Death March, for we must take responsibility for the war and confess our sin as a nation.

Furthermore, we must remember that the reality of history has been carried on, without change, and the suffering has been propagated.

In reality, when the Pacific War was initiated, we justified our cause for aggression to the Philippines and other Asian countries by creating the misconception that we were liberating the oppressed Asians under the yoke of western colonialism. It was God's judgement to force Japan to experience defeat in the war. However, Japan used other Asian countries in order to restore Japan's economic development through repeated aggressive invasions and by exploitation of their natural resources. Moreover, Japan is violating the human rights of

many men and women who are seeking opportunities in this country.

Even though our work is on a small-scale we are making efforts to try to change this situation. However, we have not yet used our historical experience of 40 years past to enrich our struggle, but rather we continue to threaten the lives of a people in Asia. Recognizing our reality we confess our sin.

We respect the United Church of Christ movement among the people in the initiation of the "Bataan March for Life" to serve as an indictment of the power which threatens lives, to sustain the integrity of life, and to strengthen God's mission through "justice, peace and the integrity of creation." At the same time we express sincere gratitude to you who have invited us to partake in peacemaking activities for justice by "breaking down the dividing wall of hostility" (Ephesians 2:14).

With this solidarity message we reaffirm our commitment through actions which will bring true justice in the relationship between the Philippines and Japan.

Rev. Munetoshi Maejima
General Secretary - NCC/J

Mr. Naoto Akiyama
NCC/J Philippine Committee

WITNESSING TO JESUS IN HOKKAIDO

In the fall of 1988 I boarded a train at Ueno station, by myself, bound for Hidaka, Hokkaido, wondering what my newly assigned church would be like. I had been an assistant pastor in a big church where there were new people visiting every Sunday. As I was waiting to transfer to a small, one-car train, I could not help but sigh and say, "Finally, I have come to this lonely place."

This feeling of lonesomeness continued. I asked myself, why have I come to a place where the sun sets at 4:00 p.m. in the

middle of December? I looked forward to Christmas at the end of the year, particularly in this dark season.

After coming to Hidaka, I brought an Ainu to the hospital after he had passed out on the street after having too much to drink. His house was located on the middle of a hill, just past a huge Torii (gate) leading to a Shinto Shrine. His home was just a small shack.

Although mainland Japanese moved into the area where the Ainu people lived, they did not build a shrine. However, by the authoritative order of the ultranationalistic military, this shrine was built and surrounded by homes for Japanese. The beautiful homes of the Japanese and the small shacks for the Ainu, are a symbol of Hokkaido's historical development.

The Ainu people did not ask the Japanese to come to this land. The same thing can be said about me. "Why did I come to Hokkaido?" I cannot only respond by saying that I came to Hokkaido for the purpose of mission. While in Hidaka I observed various forms of discrimination and exploitation of the Ainu. In this situation it was difficult for me to say, "God is love," because I, as a mainlander, could not say to the Ainu that God loves those who suffer from discrimination, and that you should be thankful to God for all you have by forgetting your pain and tears.

What I learned from this situation is that the Tenno system functions to skillfully hide the discrimination and exploitation of the Ainu.

The day the Showa Tenno died I was watching the ceremony of the national youth tournament on television. A representative said that "we, the young people, will contribute to the development of Hokkaido," at which point the people in attendance broke into applause and the camera moved to the smiling faces of the emperor and empress.

I was shocked, and my body trembled with anger, for the young people looked like marching soldiers, and no Ainu could be found among them.

The next day when I looked at the small lake, Hiren-numa I was reminded of the scene in the Bible, when the disciples gathered around Jesus at Galilee during the time of the Roman Emperor. I believe in Jesus of Galilee and I thought that this place should be the Galilee of Japan.

Just as the Roman emperor was worshipped by the people, the people of Hokkaido have also been tactfully manipulated to worship the emperor of Japan. In Ainu homes, which are small shacks, there are altars for ancestor worship according to both Shinto and Buddhist rituals. The Ainu were educated and indoctrinated to die for the emperor, and had no choice but to display a picture of the emperor in their homes.

The disciples of Jesus were discouraged and ran away to their homes when they faced Jesus' death on the cross. After my experience in Hidaka, I gained a more sympathetic understanding of their situation. For I too had felt unable to confront the difficult situation I observed. My loneliness and discouragement were gone when I realized that I was not asked to come to Hokkaido by the Ainu people.

The resurrected Christ Jesus whom the disciples met near Galilee came vividly into my mind and erased all the discouragements I encountered in Hokkaido.

by Rev. Ryusuke Fukushima
Pastor of Moto-Urakawa, Urakawa, and
Horoizume Churches in Hokkaido
Article translated and summarized from
"The Kyodan Times" (#4204, April 4, 1990)

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
FOUR REFLECT ON
JAPAN TOUR

A four-member team from the German Democratic Republic (GDR) visited Japan from March 31 to April 16, 1990. Following an orientation and meetings in Tokyo they divided into two groups: one group went to Okinawa, Nagasaki, Osaka, Kyoto and Nagoya, while the other went to

Hokkaido and northern Japan.

After Easter they returned to Tokyo and reported on their experiences before returning home. This was the first time for them to visit Japan and they recounted with surprise all the new experiences they had.

Reflecting on his visit to Nagasaki, Mr. Klaus Siebert said that as the initiators of World War II the Germans bear responsibility for the war and for a confession of their sins. And although the Japanese, as the Germans, also bear responsibility for the war, during his visit he did not hear anyone in Japan make a confession of war responsibility, yet he saw many memorials which were built to commemorate those killed by the Americans in World War II.

A visit to Kamagasaki (an area of Osaka known for its concentration of day-laborers and unemployed workers) made it possible for them to see many unemployed people on the streets. They speculated on the future of the GDR, saying that as their country goes through a process of transformation to a capitalistic system, they could experience the same problems as found in Kamagasaki.

Ms. Gisela Hartmann shared her observations on the relationship between mothers and their children, saying that it was strange to see how protective mothers were over their children, and how rare it was to see children separated from their mothers. Abortion is prohibited in East Germany, so it was very interesting for her to observe mothers worship at a temple in Kyoto in memory of their aborted children.

Ms. Gabriele Jenge commented on the current reality of rural migration in Japan; the movement of people away from rural farming communities to the urban areas in search of jobs in the industrial sector. She expressed her hope that the farmers of Japan and the GDR could establish solidarity ties and exchange information, particularly related to dairy farming.

Mr. Manfred Preusse visited "Lifeline", the Tokyo telephone counseling service and

H.E.L.P. (Asian Women's Shelter). He was impressed with the courageous and dedicated Christians who are serving others whom they have never met before. He said that many people are making much effort even though their involvement may seem small, together they are doing great work.

Among the cabinet members elected in the recent GDR elections, three are pastors. Pictures of these cabinet ministers appeared in the Japanese newspaper making the Germans feel good because now they have a reason to dream with hope for the future.

There are some young people in the GDR who are propagating German nationalism, yet until now government repression forced the young people to be silent. At last this time has come to begin discussions with the young generation on the future of the GDR.

PHILIPPINE STUDY TOUR

Organized by the Center for Christian Response to Asian Issues, eight participants visited Manila and Mindanao from March 26 to April 1, in order to establish ties of solidarity between Japan and the Philippines and to find mutual tasks for cooperative mission.

The group visited Cagayan de Oro and Iligan City in Mindanao, where they had the opportunity to learn about what effects the Kawasaki Steel Company and the In Chrome company, both joint-venture industries between Japan and the Philippines, are having on people and the environment. The workers of these companies are suffering from humiliating working conditions and the surrounding environment is being destroyed.

People's organizations in the region are actively addressing these problems and supporting those who are suffering directly as a result of the presence of these companies.

A symposium on Japan sponsored by the Ecumenical Center for Development was held

Manila in which 30 people participated. Presentations were made on three issues: migrant workers in Japan, citizens environmental movement and, the problems stated by the "Tenno" (emperor) system in Japan. The symposium was a good opportunity to introduce problems in Japan which are also related to the Philippines.

The trip was a learning experience for the Japanese participants on Philippine issues. Moreover, it was a good chance to learn directly from the people who are involved in and struggling against problems such as the U.S. Base issue, consumer unions struggling against food inflation, and the cooperative labor union movement for promotion of economic democracy.

VIETNAMESE LOOK
FORWARD
WITH CONFIDENCE

Former NCC/J General Secretary Rev. SHOJI Motomu recently returned from Vietnam where he was a part of a CCA team visit. The following is an excerpt from his trip report)

This is not my first visit to Vietnam. In 1980 I took a trip to Vietnam and Cambodia as a member of a visiting team sent by the Development & Service Committee of CCA. At that time Vietnam had suffered severe damage as a result of both US aggression and tension with China following the war of February 1979 which left the lives of the people in dire want. The distress of the people, both in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, left a strong impression on me.

Many years had passed, and upon my return I was impressed by the brightness of the people's faces and atmosphere of vigor on the street. Even in Hanoi, where the economy is less advanced than in Ho Chi Minh City, people were competing to open street stalls on every road and corner to sell everything from rice to bicycle parts. This is perhaps the most prominent feature of the new economic policy referred to as 'Doi Moi', meaning renovation, in force since 1986. People appear to be working very hard to sustain

a livelihood in every way possible, now that economic control has been loosened and people have become free to trade.

This policy has had quick results, as Vietnam is now the third largest exporter of rice in the world behind the US and Thailand, according to statistics for '88. In '87 the rice export amounted to only 100 thousand tons, but in '88 it increased to 1.4 million tons. There are various reasons for this increase such as the development of irrigation systems and machinery, and being blessed with good weather. Yet, the biggest reason for the increase is that the farmers are now free to sell their rice. When we visited an agricultural cooperative in Tan Thong Hoi village, near Ho Chi Minh City, the young leaders emphasized that the youth did not want to leave the farm to go to the city, for they were receiving a fairly good and stable income from their farms.

People in the urban areas were struggling to raise new industries and tourism. We saw young women working vigorously in a textile factory; operating modern machinery newly introduced from Japan and the USSR. The new open policy toward opening Vietnam to foreign investment will rapidly increase this kind of scene in Vietnam. Moreover, Vietnam has designated this year as "the Year of Vietnam Tourism: and is working hard to encourage foreign tourists. In Saigon, we saw many newly built hotels. The hotel where we stayed was a small and neat family hotel and we were honored to be their first guests. It is difficult to express in words how excited the family was to welcome us!

We had the opportunity to meet with many people such as the General Secretary of the Viet-Peace Committee, and many NGO leaders and government officials. From our meetings we got the impression that they have a clear hope for the future of their country. They were up-front about the difficulties confronting them: the failure of economic policies ten years after the wars end, lack of funds and skills, unemployment, bureaucratic remnants, etc. They are by no means optimists. Yet, they displayed confidence in overcoming these difficulties and in building a better and richer society by

adding openness and flexibility to their socialist policy. As someone from our team commented, "The young shall see visions and the old shall dream dreams." It is understandable that some have doubts about such hopes. Vietnam remains one of the poorest countries in the world 15 years after the end of the war. Moreover, the number of refugee's is increasing rather than decreasing. There is, of course, the potential that foreign investment and tourism development in the near future will bring a new type of domination by foreign powers and have a destructive effect on the native culture. However, I think we need to look once again at the past of the Vietnamese people. They resisted the invasions by foreign forces for a long period of time and eventually won. France, Japan, the US and China have been the aggressors against Vietnam in this century. Particularly the US, the strongest world power, sent a total of 700 thousand soldiers and dropped four times as many bombs on Vietnam as were dropped during World War II. In spite of this they eventually lost the war.

The Vietnamese achieved independence and freedom for their nation. They witnessed most clearly in this century how precious human dignity is, and also came to know how foolish is the arrogance of the big powers. This people, who have experienced such a profound history, will soon succeed to overcome their difficulties and establish a rich society. We must also notice that Vietnam's difficulties are not so much a problem of East-West, as they are a problem of North-South. Countries of the north such as the US and Japan, who still refuse to cooperate economically with Vietnam, should adopt a policy which will assist Vietnam is self-supporting development programs. During their occupation of Vietnam in the early 40's Japanese troops drove the people, particularly in the north, to near starvation. Japan's vast compensation payment made only to South Vietnam hindered the path to reunification. Moreover, Japan received many special procurements during the US-Vietnam war in their support of the US. These facts motivate us as Japanese to seek a way to take responsibility.

Human dignity as revealed in God's im finds its voice in the independence freedom of a nation, rather than in hum folly characterized by the arrogant ab of power. Vietnam cannot be excused f this same folly, as they continued maintain troops in Cambodia. We can beautify their actions. Yet, the stren of the people cannot be denied. They indeed a challenge to internation justice and peace in this century.

ATOMIC VICTIMS VISIT JAPAN

Fourteen Korean victims of the Hiroshi and Nagasaki atomic bombings who now l in south Korea visited Japan at invitation of citizens groups concern with Korea atom bomb victims.

Following the establishment of the Japan Peace Treaty in 1952, aid military personnel and their relatives legalized. However, the Koreans who w brought to Japan by Japanese colonial r were considered foreigners and thus entitled to receive any aid.

However, in 1968 a special law was pass in the Diet giving medical aid for a bomb victims, which also applied to ne Japanese nationals residing in Japan.

While the group of fourteen were visit Japan two received medical ce certificates as atom bomb victims.

It was the first time for a team of Kore atom bomb victims to visit Japan a marked a new beginning for solidar activities between Korean and Japane victims.

Before their departure on April 21, 199 a reception, attended by over 80 peopl was held at the Tokyo Peace Church launch a future of solidarity work for t human rights of atom bomb victims.

JCAN STAFF: Munetoshi Maejima, Lia Ainsworth, Aiko Carter, Anthony Carter